

## **Terminal Master's Degrees in the Rutgers Graduate School – New Brunswick**

In many disciplines an academic master's degree, Master of Arts (M.A.) or Master of Science (M.S.) or Master of Arts or Science for Teachers (M.A.T. or M.S.T.) is an appropriate advanced degree that not only provides advanced education and training in a specific discipline, but prepares the candidate for specific career opportunities, often meeting a specific set of skills needed to succeed in the public or private sector. Such advanced training is becoming increasingly important in meeting the needs of a professionally trained workforce. With the advent of All Funds Budgeting at Rutgers University, we anticipate that graduate programs across the New Brunswick campus will be newly motivated to consider new terminal master's degree programs, or new options within existing programs, since a new mechanism to fund such academic offerings is now available. Therefore, the Graduate School – New Brunswick feels it is timely to provide guidance to programs considering such new directions, so that programs will take into account the expectations that would be considered by the Graduate School before recommending adoption of these new degree options.

A program proposing the establishment of a new master's degree option within an existing program, or a decanal unit proposing the establishment of a new master's degree program, should submit a proposal that summarizes the purpose of the proposed degree option/program, the academic components of the option/program, and the resources that would be available to support the initiative, both academically and administratively. The proposal should also have examined how the proposed option/program supports the Rutgers mission and complements or goes beyond current offerings on the New Brunswick campus.

Once a proposal has been developed, a graduate program director should submit it to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who will present it to the appropriate area committee (or committees for proposals that cross the major disciplinary areas) for consideration. Upon recommendation of the Area Committee(s), the proposal is forwarded to the Executive Council of the Graduate School. Both Area Committees and the Executive Council are bodies of experienced faculty members who have been appointed or elected to serve in this oversight capacity. Both of these bodies will be examining proposals to determine how they satisfy the criteria outlined above and meet the expectations for excellence and sustainability. Upon recommendation of the Executive Council, the proposal is forwarded to the entire Graduate Faculty for consideration. New options in existing degree programs normally require no further approvals. If a new degree program is recommended, upon approval by the Graduate Faculty the proposal is forwarded to the Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs for approval and presentation to the Board of Governors. Often such proposals are also circulated to other schools at Rutgers or other universities across the state before final adoption; they may also be the subject of review by an external consultant.

Schools that currently offer only undergraduate degrees may also wish to consider professional master's degrees for which these guidelines may also be appropriate. (An example could be a Master of Engineering degree.) Consideration should be given to offering such degrees through the Graduate School-New Brunswick, to take advantage of the existing infrastructure for the guidance, support and monitoring of graduate degree programs.

The following provides additional guidance on the components of a complete proposal for a new master's degree program or option.

### Goals for the Program or Option

The proposal should document the goals that the new program is being designed to achieve: the students who would be served, the envisioned professional impact of this opportunity in meeting the needs of these students, and how the program complements the mission of the Graduate School – New Brunswick in providing graduate education. Many proposed new programs or options will be developed to serve the business or technical community of New Jersey or the tri-state region, but they could also serve teachers or the general public. Proposals should also address how graduate students in other programs in New Brunswick would participate and benefit, in particular to provide practical components to their education. The proposal should describe how the program would work with the degree recipients in preparing them for and realizing careers in the business, industry, or service sectors motivating the proposed program. Measures to evaluate the effectiveness of the new program or option should be enumerated, as well as mechanisms proposed to monitor and take into account the evolving needs of the students to be served, especially since needs in the private sector are likely to change over time. A review of the progress of these new terminal master's degrees, including data identifying the graduates' satisfaction with the program, should take place within five years after they have been established.

### Complementing existing offerings

Proposals for new programs or options are expected to go beyond the current offerings in New Brunswick, and should document that there is minimal overlap with existing degree options in New Brunswick. Any significant overlap with other programs at Rutgers University or other programs offered in the State should be documented. If there is partial duplication of other New Brunswick programs, the proposal should justify any duplication that could not be handled through cross-registration.

### Quality of the program and its offerings

Central to all proposals is a discussion of the quality of the proposed program or option. Proposals should discuss the commitment and expertise of the graduate faculty members who will be developing the curriculum and teaching the courses, the educational preparation and characteristics of the students the program will attract, and the intellectual quality of the course offerings, as well as the capstone experience.

Proposals should document the commitment of the graduate faculty of the program to develop the curriculum, teach the courses, and advise and mentor the students. The courses should be taught by tenured or tenure-track faculty members. If some courses will be taught by adjunct faculty members (who should also be members of the Graduate Faculty), their long-term commitment to the program should be documented.

An outline of the courses for the new program/option should be included with all proposal submissions. The proposals should include a description of who would take any new courses, i.e., only a new cohort of master's students, new master's students and current Ph.D. students in the same program, or more broadly master's and Ph.D. students in programs across New Brunswick. If existing courses would be used, the proposals should address the different expectations of Ph.D. students and terminal master's students in the same classrooms, or different expectations of master's and undergraduate students, if undergraduate courses would be part of the course offerings (no more than 12 credits of undergraduate courses can be applied to a master's degree). If master's students take the same courses as Ph.D. students, the proposal should address how this could affect the quality of the experience for Ph.D. students or the ability of the master's students to meet the expectations of the course. Proposals should address how courses that would predominantly serve master's students would affect the faculty's commitment to Ph.D. education in the program. Detailed course proposals need not be submitted at the time a new program or option is proposed, but must be submitted for approval by the Graduate School before they are offered.

### Admissions and Degree Requirements

Proposals should consider the optimal size of the proposed program, when the program would admit its first cohort and over what time period the program would ramp up to full size. The proposal should describe the credentials expected of successful applicants. The Graduate School currently requires GRE General scores for all applicants and TOEFL (or equivalent) for students for whom English is not a native language. Recommendations for admission should be made by a graduate faculty-based committee and would be forwarded to the Dean of the Graduate School – New Brunswick, who makes the offers of admission. Since students in professional master's programs typically do not have the credentials to proceed to the Ph.D., the proposal should address how the program would articulate realistic expectations to the master's students, i.e., that the master's program is not an entrée to an existing Ph.D. program.

Currently the Graduate School – New Brunswick requires all master's degree students to pass a comprehensive exam and a capstone experience of either a master's thesis or a creditable expository or critical essay. The proposal should describe both the comprehensive exam and capstone experiences that would be required of the degree recipients. (Proposals for new professional master's degrees, such as a Master of Engineering, should include degree requirements appropriate for that discipline.)

### Resources

The proposal should document that there are sufficient resources, both faculty and administrative, to implement a successful graduate experience. The proposal should document that graduate faculty members have been identified to teach the courses, advise the students at all stages of their studies and as they prepare for future careers, and mentor them in their capstone experiences. The proposal should also discuss the administration of the program. This includes a coordinator for a new option or a director for a new graduate program, and administrative support, such as office space, administrative support staff, and funds to recruit the new students. Should the proposed program or option, and in particular new professional degrees, attract

4/27/06

sizeable cohorts of new graduate students to New Brunswick, resources need to be provided to the Graduate School – New Brunswick to provide services for these graduate students.

If the new program or option will be requesting a tuition rate that is different from that of other Graduate School – New Brunswick programs, the differential tuition rate should be justified, and would require approval by the Board of Governors.